

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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P R 171535Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1803

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4705

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, PINT, PO, IS, AL, CH, XF

SUBJ: ISRAELI AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS

REF: (A) LISBON 4283 (DTG 010754Z JUN 77), (B) PARIS 17791

(DTG 161656Z JUN 77)(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ISRAEL'S FIRST AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL PRESENTED

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HIS CREDENTIALS JUNE 16. CRITICISM OF THE GOP DECISION TO
NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL CONTINUES. BUT IT IS
LARGELY FROM PREDICTABLE SOURCES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DEED IS DONE: EPHRAIM ELDAR PRESENTED HIS
CREDENTIALS JUNE 17 AS ISRAEL'S FIRST AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL.
TO UNDERSCORE THE POINT THAT FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH

ISRAEL SHOULD NOT AFFECT FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES, PRESIDENT EANES ON JUNE 16 RECEIVED A DELEGATION FROM THE ARAB-PORTUGUESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. FOLLOWING THE MEETING, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER PLEDGED THAT HIS ORGANIZATION WOULD DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO ENSURE CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE PORTUGUESE AND ARAB PEOPLES. HE AVOIDED COMMENT ON POSSIBLE OIL BOYCOTT, SAYING HIS WAS COMMERCIAL NOT POLITICAL MISSION.

2. BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL CONTINUES TO REVERBERATE. THE LATEST TABLE-THUMPING CAME FROM AHMED ABDULAH, A MEMBER OF THE IRAQI DELEGATION TO THE ANTI-APARTHEID CONFERENCE CURRENTLY IN PROGRESS IN LISBON. ABDULAH REFERRED TO THE PORTUGUESE ACTION AS A "VERY GRAVE" STEP WHICH MIGHT PROVOKE RETALIATORY ACTION BY THE ARAB OIL-EXPORTING STATES. IF RETALIATION OCCURRED, ABDULAH ADDED, IT WOULD NOT BE DIRECTED AGAINST THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE BUT RATHER THE ILL-ADVISED GOP ACTION, WHICH THE ARAB STATES COULD ONLY INTERPRET AS SUPPORT FOR THE "RACIST EXPANSIONIST POLICY OF THE ZIONIST STATE OF ISRAEL."

2. A POSSIBLE OFFSET?: WE NOTE EMBASSY PARIS'S REPORT THAT THE ALBANIANS HAVE APPROACHED THE PORTUGUESE EMBASSY SEEKING THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (REF B). PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR MARTINS SPECULATED THAT ALBANIAN INITIATIVE MIGHT PRESAGE A SIMILAR CHINESE MOVE, WHICH HE SAID THE PORTUGUESE URGENTLY DESIRE TO OFFSET NEGATIVE DOMESTIC REACTION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH

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ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH THE PORTUGUESE CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH CHINA, MARTINS OVERSTATES THE INTENSITY OF PORTUGUESE DOMESTIC DISCONTENT FLOWING FROM THE DECISION TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. DESPITE CONSIDERABLE CARPING IN SOME CIRCLES ABOUT THE TIMING OF THE GOP ACTION, THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE DETERMINATION OF TOP PS LEADERSHIP TO TAKE THIS DECISION. WHAT NEGATIVE REACTION THERE HAS BEEN -- FROM PREDICTABLE LEFT-WING SOURCES, SOME ELEMENTS OF THE MEDIA, AND SENIOR DIPLOMATS -- FOCUSES MORE ON THE TIMING THAN THE DECISION ITSELF.

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